



Epi Update for Friday, July 20, 2018
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

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Cyclospora testing at SHL

For patients exposed to products implicated in *Cyclospora* outbreaks and with signs and symptoms consistent with *Cyclospora* infection, it may be more efficient to test for the parasite instead of a more expensive GI pathogen panel. The State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) can test for *Cyclospora* using the modified acid fast stain method, for a fee. For those laboratories who wish to send specimens to SHL for *Cyclospora*-only testing (for a fee), additional information is available at www.shl.uiowa.edu/news/files/orderingcyclosporashl.pdf.

Laboratories are asked to send *Cyclospora* positive specimens (especially those tested using the multiplex PCR) to SHL for further characterization. There is no fee for this additional characterization. Submitters will not receive a final report for this testing. Specimens must be submitted in a preservative such as Total-Fix. Submission information is available at www.shl.uiowa.edu/news/files/sendingcyclosporashl.pdf.

Outbreak investigations from start to finish

IDPH and local public health partners have investigated multiple large outbreaks this year linked to food products sold at restaurants or grocery stores. Most outbreaks linked to a specific food or restaurant are often first identified via routine surveillance of reportable diseases performed by IDPH and local health partners throughout the state. For example, salmonellosis and cyclosporiasis are reportable diseases in Iowa and each reported case is investigated. In addition to investigation data from case interviews, Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL)

can perform confirmatory testing and genetic analysis on specimens forwarded on from clinical laboratories, which aids in linking cases together.

Public health disease investigators look for patterns in the laboratory and epidemiologic information that is reported. Investigation information is organized by person, place and time to evaluate whether there is anything in common among cases. Sometimes people get sick at the same event, like a party, and sometimes they get sick after consuming a product that is commercially distributed. If a commercially distributed product is suspected, IDPH works alongside Iowa's Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) and federal partners to track and remove or recall the product, if necessary. As part of this process, SHL also has the ability to test food products (if available). Linking pathogens found in food to those found in human cases can provide further evidence for the source of illnesses.

In such cases where there is a recall and/or an ongoing threat to public health, IDPH, DIA and federal partners will release information to the public. Recent examples include *Salmonella* linked to spring mix pasta salad sold by HyVee stores and *Cyclospora* linked to salads sold by McDonald's and vegetable trays sold by Kwik Trip/Kwik Star/Tobacco Outlet.

It should be noted that the majority of cases of foodborne illnesses are not usually linked to a specific outbreak. Also, sometimes consumers believe that the last restaurant meal they consumed is the most likely cause of their illness, but different bacteria, viruses and parasites take some time to incubate before a person starts having symptoms. It is often more likely that an illness is caused by improper food safety practices in the home.

For more information about *Salmonella* linked to spring mix pasta salad sold by HyVee, visit www.cdc.gov/salmonella/sandiego-07-18/index.html.

For more information about *Cyclospora* linked to salads sold by McDonald's and *Cyclospora* linked to vegetable trays sold by Kwik Trip/Kwik Star/Tobacco Outlet, visit www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/outbreaks/index.html.

For general food safety tips, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

How does IDPH decide when to go public with an outbreak?

In accordance with Iowa code, IDPH carefully protects the private information that it receives as part of disease investigations. Individual illnesses are almost never discussed by IDPH, including confirming or denying an individual diagnosis. However, there are some reasons why IDPH may need to share information with the public, including:

- a product recall has been issued
- a contaminated product is reasonably assumed to still be stored in the homes of consumers and could be consumed

- the agent that has caused illnesses can be treated or prevented with medication or vaccination

IDPH continues to work hard to protect and improve the health of Iowans by conducting these investigations and communicating accurate and timely information to the public.

Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update

The new issue of the Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update is available on our website. Visit idph.iowa.gov/CADE and scroll down to “Reports” or access the report directly with the following link:

idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/79/Reports/Misc/Monthly%20Report/IADMU%20July%202018.pdf

In the news: FDA approves TPOXX to be the first drug for smallpox

www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2018/07/15/fda-approves-tpoxx-to-be-the-1st-drug-for-smallpox/#36bbbd875356

In the news: A twist on Charles Dickens - He was a public health pioneer too

www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/07/05/626114059/a-twist-on-charles-dickens-he-was-a-public-health-crusader-too

Infographic: If it's green, don't go in



To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/habs/images/button-if-its-green-fb.jpg.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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